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A New Milestone

Vishnu Dutt

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE on Community Development with the State Minister's Conference following close on its heels was held in Hyderabad in July last. These Conferences marked a 'new milestone' in measuring the achievements and failures of the C.D. Programme and in assessing the need to give it a new orientation.

Those who had gone there with a hope to see something of the 'Panchayati Raj' spirit in action must have returned somewhat disillusioned. The long and elaborate agenda prepared with meticulous care and hard labour within the four walls of Krishi Bhavan, lacked the freshness and rawness which characterise the "Planning from below", a principle which forms the backbone of Panchayati Raj. If Panchayats could be relied upon to prepare their own Third Five Year Plans as has been done in Rajasthan, they could certainly be expected to draw up a list of their problems and the possible solutions which would have provided a more realistic ground for discussions in the Conferences.

The Conferences must have left equally cold those persons who inspired by the resolutions of the All India Panchayat Parishad held at Jaipur under the chairmanship of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, had hoped for revolutionary and basic changes in the constitution so as to have self-governing bodies at various levels from Gram Sabha to Lok Sabha, or who had expected radical changes in the system of elections so as to avoid evils resulting from elections based on party system.

TEN POINT TEST

1. *Production in agriculture as the highest national priority during the Third Plan.*
2. *Promotion of rural industries.*
3. *Development of co-operative institutions.*
4. *Development of local resources including the utilisation of manpower.*
5. *Optimum utilisation of resources available to Panchayati Raj institutions such as money, staff, technical assistance and other facilities from higher levels.*
6. *Assistance to the economically Weaker Sections of the community.*
7. *Progressive dispersal of authority and initiative, both vertically and horizontally, with special emphasis on the role of voluntary organisations.*
8. *Understanding and harmony between the people's representatives and the people's servants through comprehensive training and education and a clear demarcation of duties and responsibilities.*
9. *Progressive increase of competence both in officials and non-officials.*
10. *Cohesion and co-operative self-help in the community.*

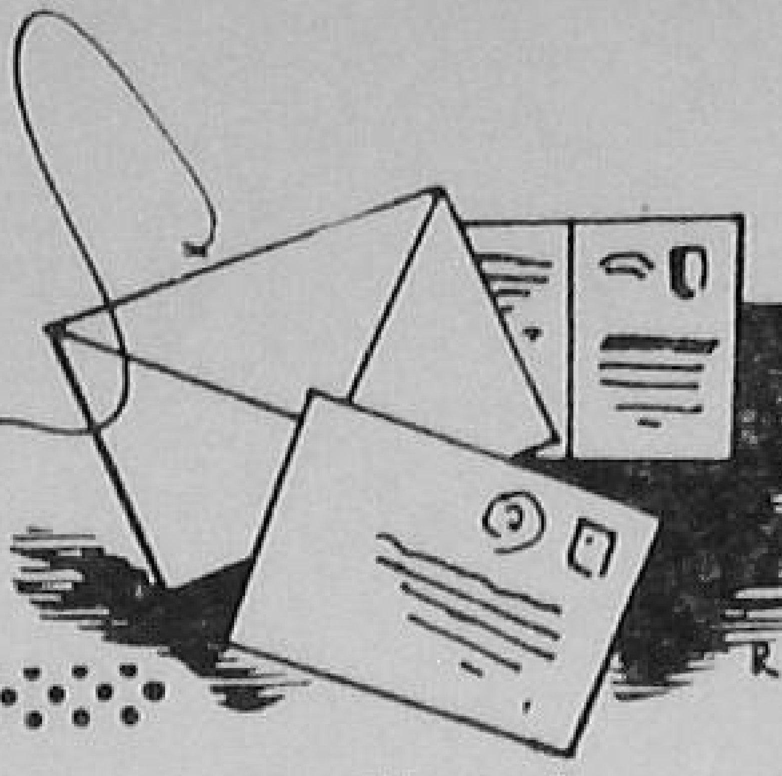
GRAM SABHA—THE FOUNDATION

But one may well argue that such sweeping and fundamental changes were perhaps beyond the pale of the Conferences. Within their inherent limitations, the Conferences succeeded in tackling these basic issues as best as they could.

For the first time, the Gram Sabha, the foundation on which rests the entire fabric of Panchayati Raj, was sought to be given statutory recognition. It was recommended that the Gram Sabhas should hold at least two meetings in a year when the budget, new proposals for taxation and progress of work done by the Panchayat should

(*Continued on page* 4)

LETTERS



RURAL DEMOCRACY OR PANCHAYATI RAJ

Sir,

PERHAPS, none would quarrel with Mr. Vepa for his attack on the epithet "Democratic Decentralisation" as published in the Panchayati Raj issue of July, 1961. The term is no doubt vague and does not represent the novel experiment going on in the rural areas. But, the preference given by the Prime Minister to the term "Panchayati Raj" is meaningful, as it conveys the spirit of the three-tier democracy, and will hold good even if more tiers are added to it, *e.g.*, the Gram Sabha etc.

The panchayat has had its roots in the Vedic Age, and since then, has represented every type of effort aimed at democracy in this country. This ancient association of the term with the democratic institutions has its value and should not, therefore, be discarded on whimsical grounds.

Mr. Vepa has objected that the phrase has "led in some quarters to the expectation that the new institutions are semi-sovereign bodies while in practice they are subject to both official and non-official checks at all levels".

How is a Panchayat construed to be a sovereign body? There are still Panchayats of every caste, tribe and clan in the villages. They never wield any power except by the will of the majority, and for that the term is nowhere misunderstood. None confuses a communal Panchayat with Gram Panchayat, and Gram Panchayat with Nyay Panchayat. How then is it possible that the Panchayat under this novel experiment should be misconstrued as sovereign?

Again it is not understood what difference it would make if the Panchayats are not linked to the Samities. The very word 'Panchayat' denotes no power. It only signifies a body of five persons or more. Everybody understands this word in this sense.

The difficulty seems to arise with the addition of the word 'Raj'. How this word "Raj" militates against the democratic spirit, is not understood. Mr. Vepa has translated the word in English as 'Rule'. What is there undemocratic about the phrase 'Panchayati Raj' when translated as "Rule of the People".

Now, let us examine what the term "Rural Democracy" which Mr. Vepa has given, conveys? Democracy means government of the people, by the people, for the people. Mr. Vepa has accepted the 'official and non-official checks at all levels' in the present experiment. How would such a definition fit in with the checks proposed? Surely, it cannot.

The nomenclatures once given are seldom changed. If we give at every stage of experiment a new name there would be no end to it, and it would make confusion worse confounded. Therefore, it is worthwhile that the term should connote the widest meaning.

The present so-called official and non-official checks are for the experimental period only. When the people gain sufficient experience in administration, they would be seen nowhere.

In the recent conference of the Development Commissioners at Hyderabad, Shri S. K. Dey posed the question "Whether Panchayati Raj institutions should continue to function as local self governing bodies at three levels up to the district or should grow on the lines of a Government extending from the village, the block and the district to the State and the Centre?"

The vision of future India is to cover the whole country with Co-operative Societies

and Panchayati Raj institutions from the village, block, district and state levels to the Centre. Shri S. K. Dey is even looking forward to the day when the Centre would have been deprived of all powers except foreign affairs, defence and currency.

Viewed in this background, the substitution of the term "Democratic Decentralisation" by "Panchayati Raj" is the most appropriate.

3-8-61 Yours etc.
Narendra Sahai Sexena,
Tehsildar.

Sangod,
Dist. Kotah,
Rajasthan.

(*We agree with our correspondent's view that the nomenclature should be such as to cover the movement in its widest range. It is precisely for that if for no other reason that the term Panchayati Raj seems to be quite justified. Shri Ram K. Vepa, in his letter published earlier in our July issue, had expressed doubts about the propriety of using the word "Panchayati" on the grounds that the village Panchayats have limited powers in the new set-up and are not linked with each other organically. However, a deeper probe will reveal that in the ultimate analysis, the Panchayati Raj institutions are expected to be interlinked with each other and to form parts of an organic whole—each body enjoying sovereignty in its own right without interfering in the jurisdiction of the other. No doubt, in the initial stages, there may be some checks and controls superimposed so as to give an appearance that these bodies are not sovereign But this is only a passing phase. The term "Panchayati Raj," therefore, seems to be the most appropriate one.—Ed.*)

* * *

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE—THE BOTTLENECK

Sir,

I was glad to read the article "How to make best use of Cowdung". Our panchayat,—Mundgod, had installed a Cowdung gas plant for the purpose of street lighting at a cost of about Rs. 27,000. We could not get the aid of any technician at the time of installation of the plant which continued to give some gas for lighting purposes. Ultimately it has become of no use as there is no proper technical guidance available to us. We will be greatly obliged if you introduce us to some technicians who could come personally to set the things right. Our panchayat is ready to meet the cost of the technician's visit.

Yours etc.
G. M. Ganiger.

Vice-President,
Mandal Congress,
Mundgod, Mysore.

(*Our correspondent is advised to refer his problem to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi.—Ed.*)

* * *

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ELECTORATE

Sir,

Panchayati Raj (democratic decentralisation) is the rule of the people and for the people. In it every individual gets a chance to do something. It calls for co-operation and harmony in working. As the individual communities have to govern themselves they have to be self-reliant and resourceful. Individuals have to federate harmoniously into families, the families into a village or Panchayat, and the Panchayats into tahsils and so on. It is an ideal way of Government which should ensure rapid and lasting progress. But on the actual field the things are far below expectations. Then, where is the hurdle?

It will be seen that the defect lies with both the officials and non-officials. One can say that the officials have to conform to certain laid down conditions and have to be wary of the rules and regulations as otherwise they risk their jobs. Also it can be said that if the non-official side is honest and God-fearing the officials won't get a chance to misbehave.

It is the people, who get elected and run the Panchayati Raj, who count. Much depends on these persons. Some of them come for self-aggrandisement, some for profit or personal gains, and some by sheer circumstances. Actually very few people come with the idea of serving the community without expecting any returns.

The persons bent on self-aggrandisement are always after getting into the Chairmanship or Vice-Chairmanship and getting into all the committees. They gloat over their position once they are in it and forget their

responsibilities to the community, if at all they had it in mind at any time.

I know of several persons, who think too highly of themselves and insist that others should also think likewise of them. When they find that they have not been properly addressed, they become wild. They insist that the staff should pay respect to them. They are ever ready to make allegations against the staff without much proof and are always in search of an opportunity to malign them. They love to make scenes in the office and in the meetings. Even though they may be in the wrong they will approach higher authorities, sometimes by telegram and ask for punishing their own staff.

Unfortunately, in our corruption-ridden country, even the elected persons are not above-board. There are instances of Samiti Presidents inducing contractors to grease their palms.

Some people work their way up into positions of power only to make a living. If they don't find it convenient to keep up their positions, they apply for jobs. There are instances of Samithi Presidents applying for a primary teacher's or similar job. I do not wish to underrate the primary teacher, but the point is that a president makes use of his position to get one job or the other.

It is the duty of the electorate to elect the right type of persons to these public institutions. The voter must think of the propriety of these public institutions. The voter must think of the propriety of his choice before he makes one. He should not be gullible to the sweet talks and abstract promises of the candidate. If he exercises his vote cautiously then there will be no chance for opportunists and undesirable elements to get into the elected bodies. Then the elected bodies will function smoothly leading to rapid progress.

17-5-61 Yours etc.
Jaglbet, *V. D. Malgavkar.*
via. Londa.

A NEW MILESTONE

(Continued from page 1)

be reviewed. The making of the Village Panchayat answerable to the general body of village folk will help curb groupism, factionalism and selfishness displayed by the members of the Panchayat.

The necessity for having unanimity in Panchayat elections was recognised and it was suggested that incentives in the form of additional financial allocations should be offered to Panchayats to the extent they bring to bear unanimity and cohesion at the time of elections and later in their day-to-day working. The complex issue of the relationship of the Collector vis-a-vis the Zila Parishad came up before the Conferences but a clear-cut decision could not be taken except in so far as the broad principle was accepted that the "collector should be completely outside the Zila Parishad but should have a right to take part in the deliberations whenever he considers this necessary". On the question of the payment of salary or honorarium to Pradhans and Pramukhs, the Conferences gave their considered opinion that it was preferable not to pay salaries, though Travelling and Daily allowances could be given to enable them to meet their out-of-pocket expenses.

TEN-POINT TEST

The Conferences gave thoughtful consideration to and enlightening guidance on various emerging problems of Panchayati Raj *e.g.*, the healthy relationship between the officials and non-officials, increasing agricultural production, having integrated village industries programme, increasing financial resources of Panchayats, optimum utilisation of local resources and the protection to the weaker sections of the community. But perhaps by far the most important recommendation made by the Conferences was the "Ten-point test" to serve as a yardstick to measure the extent to which the various Panchayati Raj institutions have discharged their responsibilities. What uptil now had remained a vague and indefinable determinant has been finally given a concrete shape. This will undoubtedly help a clearer and better understanding of the objectives of Panchayati Raj and thus indirectly foster better relations between the officials and non-officials which is the 'sine qua non' of success.

Cheese From Kalimpong

S. N. Bhattacharya

BORDER TROUBLE along the northern frontier of West Bengal brought the lovely hill resort of Kalimpong prominently into the political map of India. In the confusion created, the sad plight of thousands of local wool workers went unnoticed. They were suddenly rendered jobless the moment the new masters of Tibet stopped exporting raw wool from across the border.

But it was not long. The Podang Cheese and Condensed Milk Centre was started under the auspices of the State Govt. to train local people in the preparation of cheese and condensed milk from out of the abundant milk that the area produces.

Ujir Singh, a milk-man of village Algarh of the Kalimpong Development Block, started supplying all the forty seers of his milk from five cows to the Pedang centre. He was also watching intently as to what was happening to his milk. He saw the processes of cheese-making and soon realised that it was not a very difficult job. There was no learned process involved in it and he could make more money from it. Moreover, it did not cost him much to get the few useful utensils. He got all help, particularly technical guidance from the centre. He had prolonged and excited arguments with his family members about the new venture he was contemplating. His is a family of hereditary milkmen and they decided to take a fifty-fifty chance. "Half of our total milk will be used for cheese making", was the final verdict.

Government is giving all possible aid to make the cheese-making industry a paying concern. The Government procures from abroad a chemical substance needed for making cheese and distributes it, by way of encouragement, to those eager to make use of it. The Government is also prepared to purchase the finished commodity. But there is a huge demand for it in the market. Local shops in Calcutta alone sell, on an average, 500 lbs. a day. With foreign cheese banned, the local cheese is very much in demand. Ujir Singh gets two pounds of cheese, worth more than ten rupees, from his ten seers of milk. He gets six ounces of cream as well. Whey is also not wasted. Any piggery will buy this wholesome food. In fact, the Pedang centre is planning to have one piggery attached to it. The cheese industry, indeed holds out bright prospects for men like Ujir Singh who have the vision and drive to take up the industry seriously.

Three Paddy Crops in One Year

Bire Naik, a Harijan cultivator of Kathagoda village in Kespur Gram Panchayat in Khallikote C.D. Block, some 60 miles from Bhubaneswar, is a much-sought-after man. Reason ? He has grown three paddy crops on the same field in one year. As a result, not only his neighbours but also several members of the Gram Panchayat want seeds from him.

Naik's achievement has been put in black and white on a board that catches attention while you drive from Bhubaneswar to Khallikote, some 4 miles before you reach the Block headquarters.

The story of Naik, 49 years old, is very simple. With a family of five, he had incurred debts and was keen to raise a bumper crop to pay off the arrears. During his discussions with the Block Extension Officer (Agriculture) of the ways to increase his yield, he learnt of N 136, a new strain of paddy developed at Berhampur agricultural research station, which ripens early.

(*Continued on page* 7)

WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVES IN KASHMIR

Jai Kishori Bhan

UNTIL ONLY about fifty years ago, when the Banihal Cart Road was built by the then Maharaja, Kashmir, was not easily accessible to the outsiders. The Mughuls who annexed Kashmir are reported to have been confronted with terrible difficulties on their way to the valley. History shows that Jahangir went twice and Shah-i-jehan only once to this "paradise on earth". The difficult terrain and inaccessibility made it impossible for Kashmiris to have commerce with outside world. It was perhaps for this reason that the need for self-sufficient economy arose and the inhabitants divided economic functions among them in order to meet their economic needs.

PROUD WAGE-EARNERS

In this division of labour women have played an important role. They have not only been mothers and cooks but proud earners of wages. They have been spinning wool for winter and cotton for summer and weaving Kangries, baskets and mats. In other States of the country women have to be taught arts and crafts in order to absorb them in creative occupations. But here they know the art of spinning so well that there are families which live upon the wages their women-folk get from spinning. The soft underwool of the Shawl Goat found in Chanthan, the extreme border of the State is the raw material for Pashmina textile. This raw wool is not spun in Ladakh where it is sold but in Srinagar. The women spinners of Srinagar mostly spin the thread for Pashmina cloth.

Time is always in a flux. The development of roads and easy means of communications have obviated the need for self-sufficient economy giving rise to the problem of unemployment among women. Many a middleman operates between the spinners and the weavers, even when they are the members of the same family. There are at least thirteen middlemen operating at various levels of the Pashmina industry which has made Kashmir famous. Small wonder if the women fail to derive any positive advantage from their handicrafts.

COOPERATIVE ONLY HOPE

Cooperatives hold out the only means of their redemption. The capital investment required for the organisation of women's cooperatives is comparatively very little and the employment potential is far more. Pashmina spinning needs an investment of just Rs. 10 per head, wool Rs. 12 and silk Rs. 16, as against Rs. 687.50 required by a Pashmina Weaver, Rs. 587.50 by a silk weaver, Rs. 767.50 by an Embroidery worker and Rs. 587.50 by a Carpet Weaver.

NOT AS ADJUNCTS

It was at Zadibal and Chattabal that a women's organisation was started with 21 women as associate members of the men weavers' cooperative society. The women of Chattabal were very enthusiastic and they soon appreciated the advantages inherent in cooperative effort. Their self-confidence grew and in course of time they longed to be independent. They no longer wanted to exist as adjuncts of Men's Cooperatives and receive dictation. They strove for a separate Society of women and on 7th September 1959, they succeeded in getting a separate women's Society registered. The number of women in this Society today is 232. More women want to become its members. They have realized that they were previously exploited by the '*Poiwani*' the middleman who used to provide Pasham at Rs. 1/12 per chattak. The Cooperatives are now making it available at Rs. 1/4 per chattak. In the wages also they find an increase. Previously they used to get only Rs. 3/2 per chattack. The Society now gives them a wage of Rs. 3/8 per chattack. With one voice, they cry "Cooperative Society—Zindabad".

Nothing succeeds like success. And so the idea of cooperation has caught on and spread. Similar societies have now been registered at Zadibal and Safa Kadal. Total number of women enrolled in Pashmina Spinning Cooperatives is 328. There is lot to be achieved yet, keeping in view the fact that there are 12,000 women in Srinagar who do spinning.

The cooperative movement has been extended to cover other industries as well. For instance, a society of spinning of wool at Nooripora has recently been organized and registered. It has thirty members. More are applying for membership. But further progress is held up due to lack of wool.

The silk Cocoon waste which formerly was used for fertilizer or thrown out as waste is now being used by the Matka Silk Spinners' Women's Cooperatives who spin Silk thread out of it. On roll to-date are 105 women who get a wage rate of 2½ annas per tola and an individual woman can spin five tolas per day. If cocoon waste is made available by silk factories to the Women's Cooperatives, stable employment can be found for a large number of women.

THE BIG QUESTION MARK

It has become a fashion to say, "The Cooperative Movement has failed but it must succeed". That it must succeed no one can dispute. But the big question mark is: How ? Here is what women's cooperatives have successfully achieved. There are no doubt serious hurdles in the way, some of which only have been overcome. There are others far bigger waiting to be tackled. But there is no doubt that these too can be solved if only the Government no less than the so-called Private Sector brought to bear on the problem a sympathetic and realistic approach.

THREE PADDY CROPS IN ONE YEAR

(*Continued from page 5*)

When, however, the Extension Officer told Naik that he was himself so confident that he was prepared to bet Rs. 200, Naik accepted 10 seers of the new strain. He planted it on his half acre plot on the lines of the Japanese method. In 4 months only, the crop was ready and he harvested 12 maunds of paddy of this early variety.

The harvesting operation was followed by the transplantation of the local "Nawabi" variety (BM6), yielding about 18 maunds on the half-acre plot. The harvest operation was followed by yet another transplantation of N 136. The third crop, like the previous ones, was treated liberally with green manure and ammonium sulphate and fed by the irrigation water from the small local tank and came off very well.

The success of growing three paddy crops on the same piece of land has emboldened Naik to hope that he will clear off the debts. More important is the fact that he has demonstrated to others in his village and the Gram Panchayat that any one using the new strain can grow three crops in a year, supplement his income and also contribute to increased yield of foodgrains in the country.

BETTER TOOLS FOR

IMPLEMENTS WHETHER in industry or agriculture, play an important role in increasing productivity. Unfortunately in the agricultural field, these have for generations remained practically unchanged. With slight adaptation here or there, the farmer has used almost the same implements which his fore-fathers used in the remote past. The Prime Minister has, therefore, rightly pointed out that the acid test of the success of our schemes is as to how far we succeed in replacing the old ploughs with the improved ones. In the last few years, a series of measures have been adopted in the fields of research, extension service and manufacture, to devise better, more productive tools and take them to the farmer's doorstep. What is now proposed to be done, in the Third Plan, would give a big spurt to the movement for higher output.

DEMONSTRATION OF SUPERIORITY

In about 1,000 development blocks in 100 districts all over the country, the use of improved agricultural implements will be demonstrated to bring home to the peasant the superiority of these tools. This will be the first step towards persuading the farmer to discard the traditional, labour and time-consuming and less productive implements.

With the assistance of trained technical staff, special units for demonstration and popularising the new tools would move from village to village to carry their message to the cultivators. At Block headquarters, it is proposed to build up a stock of implements for demonstration and hire.

At the same time, arrangements are to be made to ensure credit facilities through loans or other forms of assistance so that the willingness of the peasant to take to better tools is not handicapped by lack of money to buy them. Co-operative agencies are expected to play a useful part in providing credit.

MANUFACTURE AND SUPPLY

The supply of tools, which is another important link in this chain, is to be assured through arrangements for supply of iron and steel to manufacturers of such implements. There are nearly a hundred manufacturers and suppliers of implements in the country who make and sell over 50 different improved implements and an equal number of hand tools.

Besides, in each State there will be at least one centre run by Government for manufacture of agricultural implements of improved types so that other manufacturers can benefit in terms of designs and technical advice and guidance.

Agricultural workshops have been set up at 25 extension training centres during the Second Plan. They undertake manufacture of improved implements and provide training facilities to extension workers. Another 25 workshops are expected to come up during the Third Plan.

TESTING CENTRES

Four regional research-*cum-testing* centres for bullockdrawn implements are now in the process of being set up at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Delhi, Coimbatore (in Madras State), Poona (Maharashtra) and Haringhata (West Bengal). These centres will have facilities for testing and further improving of agricultural implements. Arrangements will also be made for their manufacture and supply. Later, the number of such centres may be expanded so that there is one centre for each State.

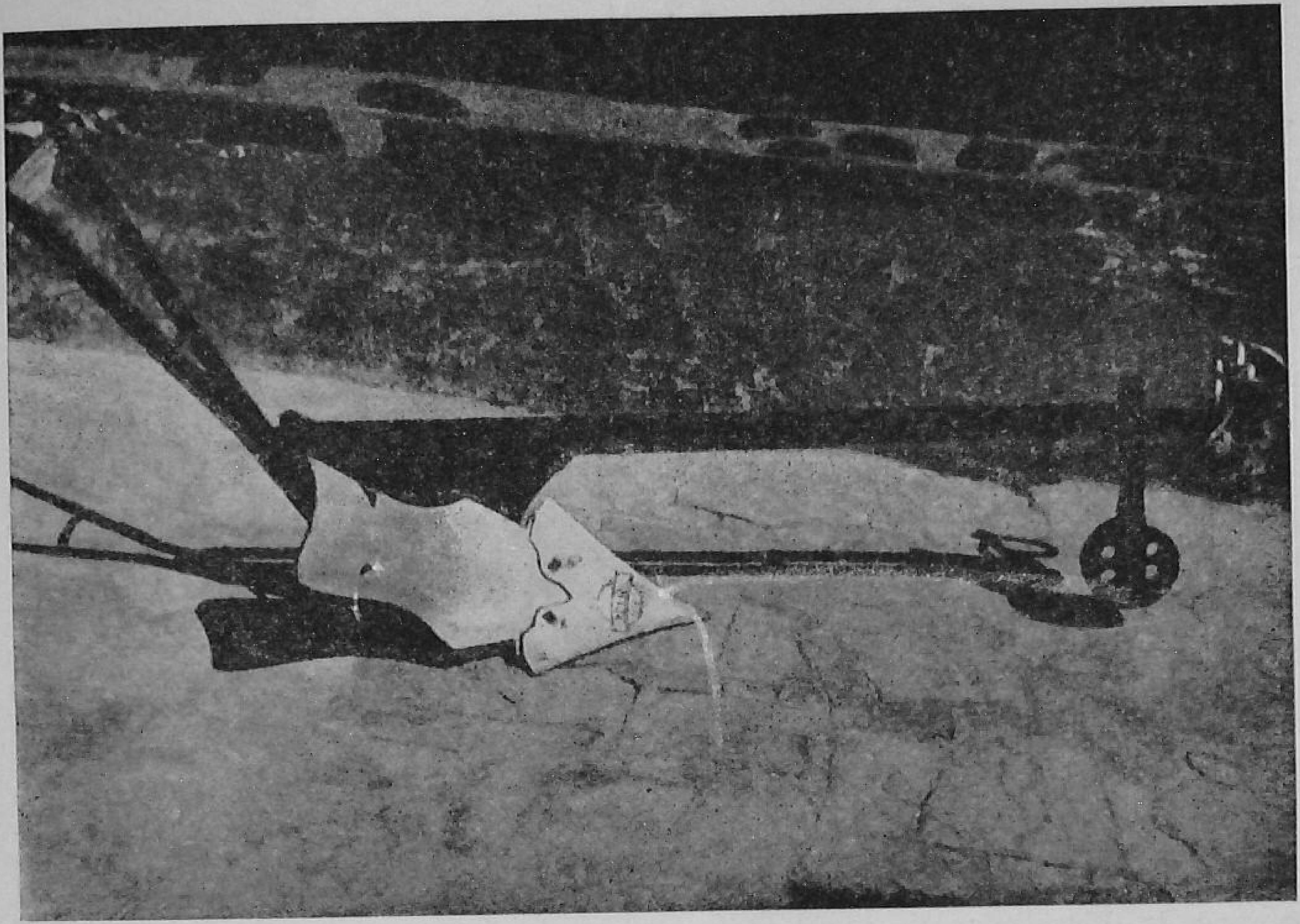
Another important step is the programme for the training of village blacksmiths and carpenters in the repair and manufacture of improved implements. The engineering personnel of the Agricultural Departments of States is to be strengthened so that they can cope with this expanded programme.

The progress achieved in different fields like research and extension so far will make it possible to carry this programme through.

NEW IMPLEMENTS

A number of simple and efficient farm implements,

HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY



Heavy Mould board type plough

which save labour and time and facilitate better germination, growth and yield of crops, have been devised by research workers in the field of agricultural engineering. Useful work has been done at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Delhi, and the Indian Central Rice Institute at Cuttack.

The results of this research have been applied on the ground in a number of States. Between two and three lakh peasants in Maharashtra are now using the mould board type of steel plough suited to the hard soil which obtains in many parts of that State. This plough is a great improvement on the traditional one and is very useful for the black cotton soil.

Similarly, thousands of bullock-driven sugarcane crushers and rotary type fodder cutters are being increasingly used by farmers in the Punjab, U.P. and Delhi. Japanese type rotary paddy weeders have been adopted by several thousand peasants since the introduction of the so-called Japanese method of intensive cultivation of paddy.

Another implement which is steadily gaining popularity is the three-row seed drill known as *Trifali* with seeding attachment. This is a multipurpose implement and can be used for ploughing, ridge making, and for sowing by attaching various types of attachments.

This implement is useful for sowing crops like wheat, jowar, maize, etc. Introduced a few years ago, 4,000 units of this implement have so far been purchased.

A new, silent revolution may be initiated with the large scale replacement of the traditional tools of agriculture by such tested and better implements.

HYDERABAD CONFERENCES ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

THIS YEAR'S annual conference on Community Development was held from July 13 to 15 at Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, one of the pioneering States, in the implementation of the scheme of Panchayati Raj. It was followed by a two-day Conference of State Ministers for Community Development and Panchayati Raj. We give below the main recommendations and conclusions of the two Conferences.

PAYMENT OF HONORARIA

The consensus of opinion regarding the payment of honoraria to Presidents of Zila Parishads & Panchayat Samitis and chairmen of Standing Committees was that no salary or honorarium be paid to these functionaries. However, since they have to spend considerable amount on travelling, etc., they may be paid T.A. and D.A. etc., to meet their out-of-pocket expenses or a consolidated amount in lieu thereof. The quantum of these allowances may be decided by State Governments according to local conditions.

ASSOCIATION OF M.Ps. AND M.L.As.

The State Ministers' Conference discussed this controversial question at length and expressed the view that while M.Ps and M.L.As should be associated with Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads to act as elder statesmen and give mature advice, they should neither hold office in these institutions nor enjoy the right of vote.

INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Highest priority was given to the question of increasing agricultural production. It was recommended that distribution of water from Government outlets should be taken over progressively by local institutions preferably by irrigation co-operatives or Panchayats. In order to popularise the use of improved implements, their sale at rates to be subsidised by Government was suggested. A committee consisting of representatives of the Ministries of Food and Agriculture, Steel, Mines and Fuel, Railways, Commerce and Industry, Transport and Communications and Community Development and Co-operation, a representative of the Planning Commission and representatives of a few State Governments was formed to review the whole position in regard to the supply of iron and steel and coal for agricultural purposes and devise suitable arrangements to meet the requirements of the State Governments. The Conferences were emphatically of the view that the Central Government should take early steps to decide on a price policy for food-grains and implement it.

RURAL INDUSTRIES

The Conferences emphasized the importance of making every effort to ensure that the integrated programme for rural industries envisaged in the Third Plan was implemented. It was felt that the Panchayat Samitis could play a major role by promoting certain industries such as processing and servicing. They could also assist in the training programme of artisans.

ACID TESTS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

For the success of democratic system in this country, Panchayati Raj must grow and satisfy what was described as the ten-point test. This includes (i) top national priority to agriculture, the Third Plan target of which called for a "spine-breaking effort"; (ii) promotion of rural industries; (iii) promotion of co-operative institutions for development of the economy;

(*Continued on page* 16)

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

AN ENVIABLE RECORD

SINGPURA VILLAGE (Ambala District, Punjab) has had an enviable record of achievement in the various fields of development. The Prime Minister, who visited the village commended it as an example of 'outstanding results achieved through self-help'. The same person has been the Sarpanch for 40 years in this village having been returned unopposed from time to time.

* * *

A GAON SABHA'S CHALLENGE FOR INCREASING FOOD PRODUCTION

In the Almorah District of Uttar Pradesh, Gaon Sabhas of Aray and Chirauli in the Bageshwar Block have challenged other Gaon Sabhas in the State to a 'Grow More Food' Campaign this Kharif season. The Aray Gaon Sabha Plans to increase its average yield per acre from 45 to 48 maunds and Chirauli Gaon Sabha from 46 to 50 maunds. The challenge was made out at a public meeting presided over by the State Development Minister, Smt. Sucheta Kripalani.

* * *

PANCHES PLEDGE TO FIGHT SOCIAL EVILS

Sarpanches and panches of 50 Gram Panchayats of Patiala district recently took a pledge to launch an intensive campaign against social evils in rural areas.

The pledge was taken in the presence of the Superintendent of Police, at a mass rally at Ghagga village, 25 miles from Patiala. It was decided that temperance societies would be formed in the villages and a drive to educate people against the use of liquor would be undertaken.

* * *

THEY CHAMPION THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION

With the speedy expansion of education in Madhya Pradesh State many glowing examples of enthusiastic cooperation by the village people in furthering the cause of education have come to light. Mahua-Kheda is a tiny village in Raisen district, inhabited by 305 Adivasis. Recently Shri Sukha Bhoi, an Adivasi of this village offered Rs. 501 in cash and his house with four rooms for the village school.

* * *

At village Andi in Marwahi Block of Bilaspur district, recently an old lady Anupa Devi laid the foundation stone of the village school building and gave a donation of Rs. 101 for its construction.

* * *

At village Seoni in Bilaspur district, the foundation stone of the girls schools building was laid by Smt. Chookaria Bai, who gave a donation of Rs. 500 to the school. On an earlier occasion too, this old lady had given an amount of Rs. 1,500 for the school.

* * *

A praiseworthy example of development through people's participation was set by the villagers of Batiagarh and Kharedi in Batiagarh Block of District Damoh. They contributed an amount of Rs. 4,500 and Rs. 3,500 respectively for the construction of school buildings in their villages.

* * *

CHECKING SMOKING HABIT IN CHILDREN

Jathel, a village panchayat of Bundi district in Rajasthan has decided to check the growing habit of smoking among children below 16 years. The Panchayat has decided to prosecute those who are found helping the children in getting tobacco. Under the Rajasthan Smoking Act,

(Continued on page 16)

Around the States

ANDAMANS

PANCHAYATI RAJ FROM JANUARY

The Panchayati Raj in the Andaman Islands will be introduced in January next year. The decision to this effect was taken at the Advisory Committee for Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which held its first meeting in New Delhi on July 20. Thirty gram panchayats will be constituted in Northern, Middle and Southern Andamans, while the Nicobar group of islands, 19 in number, will continue to have their traditional panchayats. The Advisory Committee also approved of the land improvement schemes for the islands.

* * *

ANDHRA PRADESH

ALL TAX ARREARS COLLECTED

All the 34 panchayats under the Sabbavaram Block Panchayat Samiti launched a drive to collect all Taxes including arrears up to 1960-61 in their respective areas. They achieved a remarkable success in collecting all the dues. The success was no less due to the cordial relations existing between the officials and non-officials than to the initiative and drive of the Panchayat Samiti President.

* * *

PUNJAB

PANCHAYAT TRAINING

The second phase of the Panchayati Raj training programme in the Punjab which commenced on July 30 concluded on August 5. The revised training syllabus laid more stress on the village development plan and its preparation. The participants were given a thorough grounding in the Gram Panchayat Act. On the concluding of the camp, Shri S. K. Dey, Minister for C.D. & C. visited the training camp at Faridabad and exhorted the Panches to work for the economic uplift of the weaker sections in the same manner as they helped each other at the time of marriage and other family functions.

* * *

PANCHAYAT TERM EXTENDED

The term of panchayats, panchayat samitis and zila parishads in Punjab would be five years instead of three years as at present and two women members instead of one would be coopted in each panchayat.

* * *

LAND REVENUE FOR PANCHAYATS

In Punjab at present land revenue on holdings of less than five acres is given by Government to Panchayats. It is proposed to increase the Panchayat share of land revenue gradually and it is expected that in four or five years the Panchayats would be given the whole income from land revenue in their areas for development work.

* * *

UTTAR PRADESH

PANCHAYAT LEGISLATION PASSED

The Uttar Pradesh Kshetra Samitis and Zila Parishads Bill has been passed by the State Legislature.

* * *

FARM FORESTRY SCHEME

The Uttar Pradesh State Government have decided to introduce Farm Forestry Scheme in the development blocks of 11 districts during the current financial year. The scheme aims at providing fuel and fodder to the villages as well as timber for building purposes and for making agricultural implements. The scheme will be implemented with the cooperation of the village Panchayats.

* * *

STUDY CAMPS FOR PRAMUKHS

In Uttar Pradesh preparations have been completed for holding study camps of about 8 days' duration, of the

newly elected Presidents of the Antarim Zila Parishads and Kshetra Samitis. One Central Camp will be held for the presidents of the Antarim Zila Parishads and 12 camps will be held for the Pramukhs.

* * *

MADHYA PRADESH

PANCHAYAT BILL PASSED

The Madhya Pradesh Panchayats Bill has been passed by the State legislature.

* * *

MADRAS

PANCHAYAT UNIONS TAKE UP C.D. PROGRAMME

The first batch of Panchayat Unions has been entrusted with the execution of the Community Development programme with effect from 1.4.1961. As per the time schedule prescribed by the State Government the second and third batches are to be entrusted with the programme on 1-7-61 and 1-1-62 respectively. The State Government have also directed that the execution of all programmes at the village level should be undertaken through the agency of Panchayats.

* * *

WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S WELFARE

In Madras, the State Social Welfare Advisory Board, the staff of the Director of Women's Welfare, the Gram Sevaks and Social Education Organisers (Women) of C.D. Blocks have been merged together to form the State Social Welfare Board which has been entrusted with the responsibility for determining all matters of policy relating to the programme for women and children in the State and with the formulation and implementation of all schemes under this programme.

* * *

DELHI

COOPERATION OF WOMEN & HARIJAN MEMBERS

An order has been issued by the Delhi Administration providing for the election of a woman member and cooption of a Harijan member by the members of the Panchayat Samiti in cases where these persons do not get elected through the normal process. The B.D.O. has been made the chief executive officer for all development programme and has been delegated the necessary powers.

* * *

ASSAM

GRAMSABHAS TO HOLD MEETINGS

Government of Assam have issued instructions that the meetings of Gram Sabhas should be held at least once in every six months. They have also directed that the Annual plan and budget must be placed before the Gram Sabha and that the village production plans should be prepared in consultation with it.

* * *

DELIMITATION OF PANCHAYAT CIRCLES

Delimitation of Panchayat circles for the valley areas of Manipur has been completed.

* * *

RAJASTHAN

POWERS OF ZILA PARISHADS

Rajasthan Government has empowered the Zila Parishads to distribute among the Panchayat Samitis *ad hoc* grants allotted to the districts with regard to local development works, flood, fire, rural water supply, communications, improvement of village tanks etc.

* * *

TRAINING OF PANCHAYAT SAMITI MEMBERS

In Rajasthan, the training programme for members of Panchayat Samitis will be resumed from July, 1961. The programme envisages 7 courses, each of ten days' duration, for 1,750 members in the first instance at the five Panchayat Samiti Adhyayan Kendras in the State. A programme of training for new members of village Panchayats for explaining to them the importance of increasing production for the success of development plans is being carried out by the State Government. Selected V.L.Ws and school teachers in rural areas, extension officers and social workers are also receiving training at Panchayat Samiti and District headquarters.

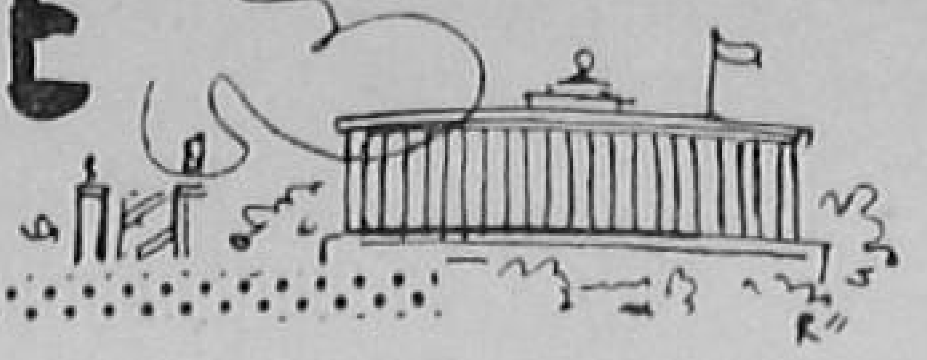
* * *

PANCHAYATS TO COLLECT LAND REVENUE

Government of Rajasthan is delegating powers to 26 selected Panchayat Samitis for collection of land revenue from July, '61 onwards.

* * *

FROM THE CENTRE



CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVES

The Committee on Consumers' Co-operatives has made a number of suggestions for rapid growth of consumers' co-operatives in the country. It has recommended Government participation in the share capital, and subsidies and loans for the construction of godowns, and also managerial subsidies. Other measures suggested include preference in the matter of import licences for consumers' co-operatives and a representation to the consumers' stores on the Import Advisory Council. Steps are also to be devised for strengthening the organisational pattern of consumers' stores on business lines, particularly at the regional level, by making it possible for them to handle wholesale trade. While a primary store should have a minimum membership of 250, a share capital of Rs. 5,000 and an annual business turnover of Rs. 1 lakh, a wholesale store at the district or regional level should have a minimum membership of 100 primary stores, a share capital of Rs. 50,000 and a business turnover of Rs. 12 lakhs every year in order to be viable. Government participation in the share capital of consumer stores, which is to be on a matching basis, is to be of the order of up to Rs. 50,000 for an apex wholesale store and up to Rs. 2,500 for a primary store. Losses, if any, may be shared in the ratio of 50:40:10 between Central Government, State Government and State Co-operative Bank concerned. Primary stores are to aim at providing a variety of goods and, if funds permit, undertaking simple processing activities like oil extraction, rice hulling, coffee grinding etc. Other recommendations in regard to governmental assistance include helping the consumer stores in securing shop accommodation; exemption from payment of sales-tax on sales effected by their affiliated primaries, concession in income-tax, assistance to Government Departments and undertakings for the promotion of consumer stores amongst their employees.

* * *

VILLAGE CO-OPERATIVE AND PANCHAYAT

The Government of India have constituted a Working Group to examine the question of the relationship between the village co-operatives and the panchayats and their higher tiers.

The Group will study the working of Panchayati Raj in its relationship with and its impact on co-operatives in some selected States. It will suggest measures demarcating responsibilities between the Panchayat and the Co-operative with a view to avoiding conflicts between them. It will also make recommendations aimed at securing co-ordination between these two institutions so that they strengthen each other.

* * *

CO-ORDINATING CO-OPERATIVE WITH AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

The Union Government has urged the State Governments to take vigorous measures to co-ordinate the activities of their Co-operative and Agricultural Marketing Departments.

The Union Community Development and Co-operation Ministry, in a circular, has suggested that better results could be obtained by appointing the same person as head of both the Co-operative and Agricultural Marketing Departments.

If this was not possible, the State Governments should at least make sure that the heads and other officials of these two departments held periodical meetings to ex-

change notes and to draw up a co-ordinated programme of work. Officials should also make periodical visits to the co-operative marketing societies.

* * *

STRENGTHENING VOLUNTARY EFFORTS

The Second Annual Conference of the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development was held in New Delhi in July last. The two days' conference was presided over by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, the President of the Association. Some 40 representatives of voluntary organisations from all parts of India attended.

The conference recommended steps to strengthen and promote all forms of voluntary effort and felt that voluntary agencies should be brought closer to one another not only at the national level but also at the taluka, district and the state levels. It was stressed that voluntary agencies themselves should take the initiative in this direction and it was not for the Government to initiate such coordination.

The conference urged that research studies should be undertaken to have an understanding of how voluntary effort can develop, in keeping with the values and beliefs of the rural people themselves. The conference devoted considerable time to discussing the role of voluntary organisations in Panchayati Raj. It was generally felt that voluntary agencies should help in strengthening the process of local self-government at the village, block and the district levels. The conference also considered the report of the AVARD team on Democratic Decentralisation in Rajasthan and decided that another team should make a study of the working Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh.

Another decision taken by the conference was to conduct a nation-wide survey of voluntary effort in all fields of social, cultural and economic activity. In the first instance the Association decided to undertake this survey in Gujerat. The survey would cover all forms of voluntary effort operating on a local, regional or national scale and whether carried on professional, caste or religious basis.

* * *

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

The Central Institute for Study and Research in C.D. at Mussoorie which had studied some State legislations on Panchayati Raj in its XVIth Course has made, *inter alia*, the following recommendations :—

(1) There is a great variation in the terminology adopted for the three-tier bodies and their office-bearers in the different States. As far as possible, a uniform terminology (avoiding use of English terms) may be adopted; at least, the use of the same terms to connote different meanings in different States may be avoided.

(2) The V.L.W. should have the right to participate in the meetings of the Panchayat and the Panchayat should have the right to ask him to attend the meeting.

(3) In some States, there appears to be a tendency for Government Departments to execute works directly even in respect of schemes transferred to the local bodies. This practice should cease.

(4) In some States (*e.g.* Mysore and Andhra Pradesh), the taxes which a Panchayat and a Panchayat Samiti shall levy, as well as the minimum rates of taxation are laid down by law. Such a provision is essential to ensure that these bodies do not fail to tap their own resources. This may be adopted in States where such a provision does not exist.

(5) There is a system in Andhra Pradesh of giving loans for water supply works on low rates of interest and easy terms of repayment. This facility may be extended to all remunerative development works and the practice adopted in other States.

(6) In Madras, the State Government gives a matching grant equal to the actual tax collection. It is suggested that such an incentive be provided in other States also to encourage local bodies to achieve maximum collection.

(7) Rules for the preparation of the budget, maintenance of accounts etc., in the regional languages is recommended.

HYDERABAD CONFERENCES

(Continued from page 10)

(iv) development of local resources, including the utilisation of man-power; (v) optimum utilisation of resources available to Panchayati Raj institutions, such as money, staff, technical assistance and other facilities from higher levels; (vi) assistance to the economically weaker sections of the village community; (vii) progressive dispersal of authority and initiative, both vertically and horizontally, with special emphasis on the role of voluntary organisations; (viii) progressive increase in competence, both in officials and non-officials; (ix) understanding and harmony between the people's representatives and the people's servants, through a comprehensive training and education programme and a clear demarcation of duties and responsibilities; and (x) cohesion and co-operative self-help in the community.

RURAL MANPOWER

The Conference emphasised the very great need for mobilising the manpower in rural areas for national development. It suggested that a systematic approach should be made to this problem, if necessary by laying down targets of utilisation of rural manpower during the Third Plan in terms of the percentage of the local manpower available for utilisation.

UNANIMITY IN ELECTIONS

The Conference emphasised the need for promoting unanimity in the elections to the Panchayati Raj institutions and suggested the provision of certain incentives in the form of additional financial allocations etc. to institutions enjoying unanimity and cohesion.

THE COLLECTOR IN ZILA PARISHAD

The Conference was generally in favour of the view that the Collector should be completely outside the Zila Parishad, but should have a right to take part in the deliberations whenever he considers this necessary. It noted, however, that many of the States had already enacted legislation in this regard and enough experience of the working of the legislation was not yet available. A final decision could be taken after some more experience in the working of the various alternatives was gathered.

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

(Continued from page 11)

the defaulter is liable to a fine of Rs. 25 to Rs. 100.

* * *

BEST DEVELOPED VILLAGE IN INDIA

Resod village in Akola district of Maharashtra has been adjudged the best village in India in community development.

Of the 357 agriculturists in the village, 312 are members of the co-operative credit society. There are two High schools,—one for boys and the other for girls. Drinking water facility is provided free to the people by the panchayat.

The panchayat has also undertaken a scheme for providing trench lavatories and plans to take up next a scheme for a pucca drainage system in the village.

* * *

GUDIBANDA BLOCK IN MYSORE MAKES HEADWAY

Gudibanda Block, in Kolar District of Mysore State has made remarkable progress in the execution of development schemes. In village Appireddy Halli, insanitary conditions prevailed, as the roads were under water. The people have now paved the streets after draining the water. A causeway was built near the Iddrahalli and Nachavalahalli villages which now provides to the inhabitants of surrounding villages easy access to various towns through a road passing over it.

A school building has been completed in Village Brahmarahalli, the villagers meeting part of the cost by contributions and part by voluntary labour.

Two co-operative societies which were defunct for many years have been revived. 68 agricultural families have been newly enrolled as members of the Service Co-operative Societies.

* * *

Embarrassing

The Hyderabad Conference recommended that the panchayat should give an account of its performance before the Gram Sabha and explain to it the new proposals for taxation, budget and other important schemes for development of the village.

The Ship of the Desert and the Fodder Cargo : *Village woman with her camel carrying fodder in Rajasthan.*

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